

Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Cuba

United States Board on Geographic Names
Foreign Names Committee



June 2016

1. Introduction

This geographic names standardization policy has been prepared as an aid to those geographic names experts who are the working staff for the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) in the standardization of the geographic names of Cuba for United States Government use. The BGN and its staff work to effect consistent treatment of geographic name spellings in U.S. Government databases, publications, maps, and charts. The country policies are intended to satisfy, in part, the statutory requirements levied upon the BGN in Public Law USC 80-242 to develop principles, policies and procedures for geographic names standardization, and to promulgate decisions with respect to the principles of geographic nomenclature and orthography.

2. Languages and Language Policy

a. Demographics

The estimated population of Cuba as of July 2015 was 11,031,433 people. The largest single ethnic group is white, constituting approximately 64.1% of the total population. The second largest ethnic group is of mestizo or mixed Amerindian and European heritage, comprising approximately 26.6% of the population. The remaining 9.3% of the population is black.¹

b. Languages

The official language of Cuba is Spanish (ISO 639-3 language code 'spa').

c. Geographic Names Standardization

According to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), Cuba's national authority for geographic names is *La Comisión Nacional de Nombres Geográficos de la República de Cuba*.² Established in 1980, the committee works to standardize geographic names in Cuba in addition to determining the Cuban Spanish spelling of foreign toponyms. In the year 2000, the committee published a gazetteer (*Nomenclátor de Nombres Geográficos Normalizados de Cuba*) at a scale of 1:25,000. The committee also participates in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) in the Latin America Division.³

¹ Cuba, The World Factbook online, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html> (Accessed 16 October 2015).

² Summary List of Authorities, National Names Authorities, UNGEGN (Online), URL: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/Summary_Authorities_list_September%202012.pdf (Accessed 16 October 2015).

³ *Informe de avance en la normalización de nombres geográficos de los países miembros de la División de América Latina*, UNGEGN (Online), URL : http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/26th-gegn-docs/WP/WP92_INFORME_DE%20LA%20DIVISION%20DE%20AMERICA%20LATINA.pdf (Accessed 16 February 2016).

3. Toponymic Policies

a. Orthography

Geographic names standardization policy will follow Spanish orthographic conventions. Please refer to orthographic reference sources such as *Ortografía básica de la lengua española* by the Real Academia Española (2012) and *Ortografía y ortotipografía del español actual* by José Martínez de Sousa (2004) for additional information.

The user of Cuban geographic sources should be aware that variant place names in local languages other than Spanish may be found on native sources, as well as various spellings as a result of rendering indigenous place names in harmony with Spanish orthographic rules.

b. Romanization

Romanization is not required.

c. Diacritics

Diacritics are shown in standardized and variant names in conformance with native sources and Spanish orthography. Uppercase letters retain diacritics. In accordance with Spanish orthography, the below letter/diacritic combinations are those found in standardized name forms in Cuba:

Character Name	Upper Case	Unicode Value	Lower Case	Unicode Value
A with acute accent	Á	00C1	á	00E1
E with acute accent	É	00C9	é	00E9
I with acute accent	Í	00CD	í	00ED
N with tilde	Ñ	00D1	ñ	00F1
O with acute accent	Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
U with acute accent	Ú	00DA	ú	00FA
U with dieresis	Ü	00DC	ü	00FC

d. Generic Terms

A generic is a term used to describe a geographic feature, such as 'river,' 'hill,' and 'lake.' If the generic term does not identify the feature, the term should be considered a false generic and should not be added to the generic field of the GNDB. Generic terms are not collected for populated places. Appendix A provides a partial list of common generic terms one may encounter in Cuban geographic names sources.

e. Hyphenation, Capitalization, and Spelling

Cuban geographic names follow Spanish grammar and spelling conventions. Hyphenated place names are seldom found in Cuba; however, when hyphens are encountered on authoritative sources, they should also be included in the feature name.

Definite articles such as *el, la, los, las* are generally capitalized when in initial position and should be collected as shown in the native source—for example, *La Delicia*. If the place name contains more than one article, only the initial one should be capitalized, unless it is also capitalized on the native source. If the article is capitalized on the native source, it becomes part of the proper name—for example, *La Habana, Bahía de*.

If the place name is written in all capital letters on the native source, the name is collected with all definite articles capitalized, including those in the non-initial position. When source evidence regarding the capitalization of the definite article is inconsistent, names of associated features (if present) can assist in deciding whether to accept or reject a particular name.

Conjunctions, such as *y* ('and') and prepositions, such as *de/del* ('of', 'from'), are collected in lower case, as in, *Santa María del Rosario*.

The chart below shows the proper capitalization of articles and conjunctions found in Cuban features:

Native Source Spelling	Collect as
Punta de las Cuberas	Cuberas, Punta de las
Loma El Palenque	El Palenque, Loma
Sierra de Camarones	Camarones, Sierra de
ENSENADA DE LA MULATA	La Mulata, Ensenada de
BAHÍA DE MATANZAS	Matanzas, Bahía de
CAYOS LOS TRES BOQUERONES	Los Tres Boquerones, Cayos

f. Numbers

Names containing cardinal or ordinal numerals should be treated according to the following guidelines:

- Arabic numbers are generally expanded in Spanish; i.e., *4 Caminos* (on source) should be written as *Cuatro Caminos*; *2da Palma* (on source) should be written as *Segunda Palma*.
- Roman numerals are retained throughout, although these are not commonly found in Cuban geographic names.

These guidelines apply to numerals in both initial and non-initial positions.

g. Optional Long and Short Forms

Short forms are not assigned to variant names in the GNDB.

Administrative division names are accorded long and short forms, e.g., Provincia Granma [long form]; Granma [short form].

Railroad station names that appear on official sources with the generic term *estación* are given long and short forms as supported by the evidence. Example: Carmen [short form]; Estación de Carmen [long form].

Where official maps show more than one populated place with the same name in the same *municipio* (second-order administrative division), distinguishing long forms should be obtained from census lists and other official sources.

h. Unique Linguistic Situations

Names Containing the Conjunction “o”

Some sources may show a feature with two or more names joined by the conjunction “o” (or); e.g., *Río Rojo o Colorado*. For standardization purposes, only one name is selected as the official approved name, which will depend on the weight of the available evidence. In the absence of additional evidence, the first name shall be used and, according to standard policy, the other names will be considered variant names.

Alternate Names

Feature names in Cuban sources often appear with alternate names in parentheses. The alternate name may appear in English, Spanish, or any indigenous language; for instance, *Punta Barlovento (Windward Point)* and *Cañapones (El Jardín)*. The name chosen as the official approved name will depend on the weight of the available evidence. In the absence of additional evidence, the first name shall be used as the official approved name, and other names appearing in parentheses will be considered variant names.

U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay

The following principles are to be applied in the standardization of geographic name spellings for features located within the U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay:

1. *Maximum consideration is to be given to official United States sources.*
2. *Preference is to be given to English forms and spellings of names, even if these names are translations, partial translations, or corruptions of Spanish names.*
3. *Dual names will be approved as appropriate for features common to the area and Cuba.*

i. Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations of generics which are commonly found on cartographic products of Cuba. This list is not exhaustive, and other abbreviations may be found. Any abbreviations must be spelled out in the GNDB.

<u>Abbreviated Form</u>	<u>Unabbreviated Form</u>
A.	Arroyo
B.	Bahía
Bco.	Banco
Bo.	Boca
C.	Cabo
C.	Cayo
C., Co.	Cerro

<u>Abbreviated Form</u>	<u>Unabbreviated Form</u>
Clla.	Cuchilla
Cord.	Cordillera
Emb.	Embarcadero
Ensa.	Ensenada
Est.	Estación
Est.	Estero
Fte.	Fuerte
G.	Golfo
Hac.	Hacienda
I(s)	Isla(s)
L.	Loma
L., Lag.	Lago, Laguna
Mte.	Monte
P.	Playa
P.	Presa
P., Pco.	Pico
Pen.	Península
Pta.	Punta
Pte.	Puente
Pto.	Puerto
Pvcia.	Provincia
Q., Queb., Qda.	Quebrada
R.	Río
S.	Sierra
V.	Valle

4. Political Geography Policy

a. Country Name and Capital

Country Name

Conventional long form:	Republic of Cuba
Conventional short form:	Cuba
Spanish long form:	República de Cuba
Spanish short form:	Cuba

Capital (PPLC)

Conventional:	Havana
Spanish:	La Habana

b. First-order Administrative Divisions

Cuba's first-order administrative divisions consist of fifteen *provincias* (provinces) and one *municipio especial* (special municipality). The provinces are subdivided into *municipios* (municipalities) which are Cuba's second-level administrative divisions.

Please see Appendix B for a map depicting first-order administrative divisions in Cuba.

Name	Generic	Seat	GEC	GENC
Artemisa	Provincia	Artemisa	CU17	CU-15
Camagüey	Provincia	Camagüey	CU05	CU-09
Ciego de Ávila	Provincia	Ciego de Ávila	CU07	CU-08
Cienfuegos	Provincia	Cienfuegos	CU08	CU-06
Granma	Provincia	Bayamo	CU09	CU-12
Guantánamo	Provincia	Guantánamo	CU10	CU-14
Holguín	Provincia	Holguín	CU12	CU-11
Isla de la Juventud	Municipio Especial	Nueva Gerona	CU04	CU-99
La Habana	Provincia	Havana ⁴	CU02	CU-03
Las Tunas	Provincia	Las Tunas	CU13	CU-10
Matanzas	Provincia	Matanzas	CU03	CU-04
Mayabeque	Provincia	San José de las Lajas	CU18	CU-16
Pinar del Río	Provincia	Pinar del Río	CU01	CU-01
Sancti Spíritus	Provincia	Sancti Spíritus	CU14	CU-07
Santiago de Cuba	Provincia	Santiago de Cuba	CU15	CU-13
Villa Clara	Provincia	Santa Clara	CU16	CU-05

c. Disputed Territories

For the latest information on country-specific boundary disputes, please consult the US Department of State.

d. Unique Geopolitical Situations

A territorial dispute exists between Cuba and the United States at Guantanamo Bay. The United States operates a military base there based on a leasing agreement that the present government of Cuba does not recognize.

5. Source Material

The preferred mapping authority for Cuba is the *Instituto Cubano de Geodesia y Cartografía* (ICGC) which possesses a catalog of maps covering that country. Other preferred references include those produced by Cuban government agencies. Sources produced by Cuban academic institutions and UN and US government agencies may be used; however, these sources are not considered

⁴ In addition to being the seat of Provincia de La Habana, Havana is the capital of Cuba.

authoritative unless they contain a caveat that the information contained was produced for the Cuban government.

a. Preferred Sources

The following list of preferred sources is not all-inclusive, but it includes those to be used for geographic name selection. Some maps series listed below have been produced by the ICGC (Cuba), IDERC (Cuba), NGA, CIA, and NGA's predecessor organizations NIMA and DMA.

1. Nomenclátor de Nombres Geográficos Normalizados de Cuba, Oficina Nacional de Hidrografía y Geodesia, 2000
2. 1:250,000-scale maps, Cuba, Instituto Cubano de Geodesia y Cartografía, 1989-1991
3. Nuevo Atlas Nacional de Cuba, Academia de Ciencias de Cuba, 1989
4. Cuba, 1:50,000-scale maps, Series E724, NGA, 1992
5. Country Handbook Cuba, U.S. Department of Defense, 2002 (Online), URL: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/pdf/CS_Cuba.pdf
6. Infraestructura de Datos Espaciales de la República de Cuba (IDERC) (Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Republic of Cuba) (Online), URL: <http://www.iderc.co.cu/>

b. Other Sources

1. Cuba Maps, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin (Online), URL: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cuba.html>
2. Cuba, Frommer's Maps (Online), URL: http://www.frommers.com/images/destinations/maps/jpg-2006/3173_cubain1week.jpg
3. Maps of Cuba (Online), URL: <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/search~S1?dCuba+--+Maps./dcuba+maps/-3%2C-1%2C0%2CB/exact&FF=dcuba+maps&1%2C82%2C>

Appendix A. Glossary of Generic Terms

The following is a partial list of common generic terms one may encounter in Cuban geographic names sources:

<u>Spanish Generic</u>	<u>Generic Designation</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>
abra	gorge	GRGE
acueducto	aqueduct, intermittent stream	CNLA, STMI
albufera	cove, lagoon	COVE, LGN
alto(s)	hill(s), mountain(s)	HLL(S), MT(S)
alturas	mountains	MTS
apeadero, apeadero de ferrocarril	railroad stop	RSTP
arenales	beach	BCH
arrecife(s)	reef	RF
arroyo	inlet, intermittent stream, stream, tidal creek	INLT, STMI, STM, CRKT
archipiélago	islands	ISLS
arroyo	stream, intermittent stream	STM, STMI
bahía	bay, cove, inlet, sound	BAY, COVE, INLT, SD
bajo(s)	reef, shoal	RF, SHOL
banco	bank, reef, shoal	BNK, RF, SHOL
boca	bay, bight, confluence, cove, estuary, inlet, marine channel, navigation channel, stream mouth	BAY, BGHT, CNFL, COVE, ESTY, INLT, CHNM, CHNN, STMM
bolsón	bay	BAY
brazo	stream, intermittent stream	STM, STMI
caballete	ridge	RDGE
cabecería	reef	RF
cabeza	reef	RF
cabezadas	headwaters	STMH
cabezo(s)	reef, shoal	RF, SHOL
cabo	cape	CAPE
caleta(s)	bay, bight, cove(s)	BAY, BGHT, COVE
caletón	cove	COVE
camino	road	RD
canal	canal, canalized stream, channel, ditch, inlet, marine channel, navigation channel, strait	CNL, STMC, CHN, DTCH, INLT, CHNM, CHNN, STRT
canalizo	marine channel	CHNM
cañada	stream, intermittent stream	STM, STMI
cañón	gorge, marine channel	GRGE, CHNM
cantera	mine, quarry	MN, MNQR
carretera	road	RD
castillo	fort	FT
cayo(s)	hammock, island(s)	HMCK, ISL(S)

<u>Spanish Generic</u>	<u>Generic Designation</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>
cayuelo(s)	island(s)	ISL(S)
cementerio	cemetery	CMTY
central	sugar mill	MLSG
cerro(s)	hill(s), mountain(s)	HLL(S), MT(S)
ciénaga(s)	lake, mangrove swamp, marsh, swamp	LK, MGV, MRSH, SWMP
colegio	school	SCH
compañía agrícola	estate	EST
cordillera	mountains, hills, ridge	MTS, HLLS, RDGE
corte	ditch	DTCH
complejo agroindustrial	agricultural facility	AGRF
costa	coast	CST
cuchillas	mountains, ridge	MTS, RDGE
cuesta	mountain	MT
cueva	cave	CAVE
dársena	port	PRT
delta	delta	DLTA
derramadero	plain	PLN
desembarcadero	landing	LDNG
desembocadura	estuary	ESTY
embalse	lagoon, intermittent reservoir, reservoir	LGN, RSVI, RSV
embalse hidráulica	reservoir	RSV
embarcadero	landing, quay	LNDG, QUAY
ermita	shrine	SHRN
escuela	school	SCH
ensenada	bay, bight, cove, estuary, inlet, lagoon, marine channel	BAY, BGHT, COVE, ESTY, INLT, LGN, CHNM
entrada	cove	COVE
entronque	railroad junction	RJCT
estación	railroad station	RSTN
estero	bay, distributary, estuary, inlet, lagoon, marine channel, marsh, stream, stream mouth, tidal creek	BAY, STMD, ESTY, INLT, LGN, CHNM, MRSH, STM, STMM, CRKT
estrecho	marine channel, tidal creek, strait	CHNM, CRKT, STRT
estribo	ridge	RDGE
faro	lighthouse	LTHSE
fondeadero	anchorage, point, shoal	ANCH, PT, SHOL
fortaleza	fort	FT
fuerte	fort	FT
fundo	estate	EST
golfo	gulf	GULF
hacienda	estate	EST
hato	estate	EST

<u>Spanish Generic</u>	<u>Generic Designation</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>
hoyo	depression	DPR
isla(s)	island(s)	ISL(S)
lago(s)	pond	PND
laguna(s)	cove, inlet, intermittent lake(s), lagoon, lake(s), lake bed, mangrove swamp, marsh, pond, reservoir, salt area, swamp	COVE, INLT, LKI(S), LGN, LK(S), LBED, MGV, MRSH, PND, RSV, SALT, SWMP
lagunato	lagoon	LGN
loma(s)	hill(s), mountain(s), ridge, terrace	HLL(S), MT(S), RDGE, TRR
lomerío	mountains	MTS
manglares	mangrove swamp	MGV
marismas	mangrove swamp	MGV
médano	reef	RF
mesa	mesa	MESA
mina(s)	mine	MN
mirador	tower	TOWR
mogote	hill(s), mountain(s)	HLL(S), MT(S)
montaña(s)	mountain(s)	MT(S)
monte(s)	hill(s), mountain(s)	HLL(S), MT(S)
monumento	monument	MNMT
morillo	hill	HLL
muelle(s)	landing, pier	LDNG, PIER
municipio	second-order administrative division	ADM2
municipio especial	first-order administrative division	ADM1
nacimiento	spring	SPNG
paradero	railroad stop	RSTP
pasa	ford, inlet, marine channel	FORD, INLT, CHNM
paso	ford, pass, marine channel, road	FORD, PASS, CHNM, RD
península	peninsula	PEN
peñas	cliff, rocks	CLF, RKS
peñón	headland	HDLD
pico	mountain, peak	MT, PK
placer	shoal	SHOL
playa	beach	BCH
poza	cove, lagoon, pool, undersea basin	COVE, LGN, POOL, BSNU
pozo	pond, well	PND, WLL
presa	dam, reservoir	DAM, RSV
provincia	first-order administrative division	ADM1
puente	bridge	BDG
puerto	bay, cove, harbor, inlet, marine channel, port	BAY, COVE, HBR, INLT, CHNM, PRT

<u>Spanish Generic</u>	<u>Generic Designation</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>
punta	cape, headland, point	CAPE, HDLD, PT
quebrada	marine channel	CHNM
quebrado	marine channel, stream	CHNM, STM
rada	anchorage	ANCH
rancho	farm	FRM
realengo	area	AREA
república	independent political entity	PCLI
restinga	reef, shoal	RF, SHOL
río	intermittent stream, stream	STMI, STM
roca	rock	RK
ruinas	ancient site	ANS
sabana(s)	grassland, plain	GRSLD, PLN
salina(s)	salt area, tidal flat	SALT, FLTT
salto(s)	waterfalls	FLLS
sierra(s)	hill(s), mountain(s), ridge	HLL(S), MT(S), RDGE
sierrita	ridge	RDGE
silla	mountain, saddle	MT, SDL
subida	slope	SLP
surgidero	anchorage	ANCH
tetas	hills	HLLS
torno	stream bend	STMB
torreteras	marine channel	CHNM
terrenos	area	AREA
universidad	college	SCHC
valle	valley	VAL
zanja	ditch, stream	DTCH, STM

Appendix B. First-Order Administrative Divisions of Cuba

